

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IGA-02 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15

STR-04 CEA-01 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 AGR-05 OES-03 /093 W

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P 050530Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9902

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 1153

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN

SUBJ: FARAKKA BARRAGE

REFS: STATE 050320; DACCA 0921

1. AMBASSADORS HERE BEGAN RECEIVING INVITATIONS YESTERDAY FROM CHAIRMAN OF BANGLADESH WATER DEVELOPMENT BOARD "TO VIEW THE PRESENT RIVER CONDITIONS IN THE SOUTH-WESTERN PART OF BANGLADESH" ON A SIX-HOUR HELICOPTER TRIP MARCH 10 WHICH WILL INCLUDE VISITS TO KHULNA, BHERAMARA IN KUSHTIA, AND RAJSHAHI. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS, EXPLAINING VISIT TO SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES LAST NIGHT AT DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION, SAID TOUR WOULD INCLUDE VISIT TO NEWAPRINT PLANT IN KHULNA (WHICH HAS ALLEGEDLY BEEN AFFECTED BY SALINITY PROBLEM AS RESULT OF INDIAN DIVERSION OF WATER AT FARAKKA) AND INSPECTION OF RIVER LEVEL AT HARDINGE BRIDGE.

2. OBVIOUS INTENT OF THIS TOUR IS TO PERSUADE CHIEFS OF MISSION HERE THAT WATER LEVELS HAVE IN FACT BEEN LOWERED AS RESULT OF INCREASED INDIAN DIVERSIONS AND THAT HARMFUL EFFECTS, FOR EXAMPLE THROUGH INCREASED
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SALINITY, ARE ALREADY BEING FELT. BDG PRESUMABLY HOPES

OTHER GOVERNMENTS, IF PERSUADED OF THE FACTS, WILL HELP INFLUENCE INDIAN GOVERNMENT ON THIS ISSUE AND PROBABLY BELIEVES THAT IN ANY CASE THE VISIT WILL HELP IN THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE WITH INDIA OVER THIS DISPUTE. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT FOREMAN SECRETARY EXPLORED WITH ME ON FEBRUARY 23 THE IDEA OF GETTING MCNAMARA OUT HERE FOR SAME PURPOSE (DACCA 0921).

3. REACTION AMONG CHIEFS OF MISSION WAS UNCERTAIN LAST NIGHT. AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER DIDN'T LIKE THE IDEA AND THOUGHT HE WOULD USE THE PRETEXT OF A RECENT VISIT TO KHULNA TO BEG OFF VBUT THAT HE WOULD PROBABLY SEND HIS DEPUTY. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR THOUGHT HE MIGHT GO, MAKING THE QQT THAT FACT OF HIS GOING WOULD NOT PREJUDGE HIS REACTION TO WHAT HE SAW. FRG AMBASSADOR DEPARTS ON HOME LEAVE TODAY BUT THOUGHT ONE OF HIS OFFICERS WOULD PROBABLY GO. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER IS ON HOME LEAVE AND CHARGE IS OUT OF TOWN UNTIL MONDAY.

4. I DO NOT PLAN TO GO, AND MY INSTINCTS ARE ALSO ON THE SIDE OF NOT SENDING A REPRESENTATIVE. APART FROM CONSIDERATIONS IMPLICIT IN PARAGRAPH TWO ABOVE, I PAID TWO-DAY VISIT TO KHULNA ONLY LAST WEEK WITH ECONOMIC OFFICER BENEDICT, DURING WHICH WE LOOKED SPECIFICALLY INTO EFFECTS OF FARAKKA BARRAGE DIVERSIONS (SEE FEBRUARY 25 TRIP MEMORANDUM POUCHED NEA/PAB TODAY, LOU REGISTRY NO. 004546) AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR INSPECTED HARDINGE BRIDGE AREA FROM AIR TWO WEEKS AGO. SOME BDG OFFICIALS, WHO SEE US AS SPECIAL FRIEND OF NEW GOVERNMENT, MAY BE DISAPPOINTED IF WE ARE REPRESENTED BUT I DON'T THINK THEY WILL BE SURPRISED IF DEPARTMENT HAS OTHER VIEWS, PLEASE ADVISE.
BOSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, WATER DIVERSION, WATER RIGHTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DACCA01153
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760084-0098
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760392/aaaadcsh.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 50320, 76 DACCA 921
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 JUN 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <30 SEP 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FARAKKA BARRAGE
TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006